



The Tricentennial
of the Harlan Family
in America 1687-1987

No. 2

The Harlan Record

413 1/2 Main St., Box 151 Boonville, MO 65233

August 1988

CELEBRATION 300 MARKERS ERECTED

On May 14, a small group of Harlans met in Pennsylvania/Delaware to dedicate markers in memory of George and Michael Harlan and their wives. The markers were installed at Centre and Old Kennett Meeting houses. The next day, church services were held at Centre Meeting to commemorate its 300 year anniversary. A potluck picnic followed, with nearly 200 people in attendance from other Meetings in the area.

The Centre plaque is inscribed as follows:

In Memory of
George Harlan (c 1650-1714)
A Founder of Centre Meeting
Elizabeth Duck Harlan, his wife
Michael Harlan (c 1660-1729), his brother
Dinah Dixon Harlan, his wife
and their descendants
Erected on the occasion of the Harlan Family
Tricentennial August 1987

The Old Kennett marker is the same, but omits the line "A Founder of Centre Meeting". The London Grove Meeting has not accepted the opportunity for a marker.

In attendance for the weekend festivities were Martha and Elgene Smith, PA; John and Annette Harlan, GA; Tom and Marylee Harlan, VA; Tom Harlan, DE; Scott and Mimi Harlan, DE; Lowell and Connie Harlan, VA; Jim and Bettis Harlan, MD; Anne Phillips Blake, DE; John Harlan, DE; Betty Hollingsworth, DE; and Madeline Clark, DE.



Martha and Elgene Smith, PA made the arrangements to have the stones made and installed. In addition, they donated \$100 in their names, and that of Phillip Gaskell Suter to each of the two Meetings for upkeep. Others who wish to donate funds to either Meeting may do so by sending checks to:

Kenneth Berry, Treas.
Centre Friends Meeting
Meeting House Road
Hockessin, DE 19707

Wallace Maw
Kennett Friends Meeting
West Sickle St.
Kennett Square, PA 19348

At the Celebration 300 reunion it was also suggested that a donation be made to St. Peters Church at Monkwearmouth to help towards restoring the damage caused by an arsonist. A check has been sent to the church for the restoration fund. Individual contributions may be sent to:

St. Peters Monkwearmouth Appeal
Barclays Bank
53 Frederick St.
Sunderland
England
Bank Sort No. 20-83-69
Account No. 30774677

NEW "OLD" NAME

The editors received over 20 suggestions from Harlans around the country for a name for this newsletter. The most persuasive case came from those who suggested that a tie to the past would be appropriate by naming it the same as the turn of the century newsletter called "The Harlan Record". The name as it appears here was copied from a 1902 edition. The name was suggested by Cindy Harlan Breen, NE; Elenora Harlan Matlock, IN; and Steven E. Coulter, IA. The editors would be pleased to receive photocopies of any of the original Harlan Records, and will include excerpts in future newsletters.

HARLAN HAPPENINGS

The annual meeting of the Harlan Association of Texas will be held Sunday, October 2, 1988 at the Blue Ridge Baptist Church near Marlin, Texas at 11 a.m. following the regular church service at 10 a.m. Picnic on the church grounds will follow. Approximately 100 descendants of No. 194 AARON HARLAN are expected to attend. However, any Harlan descendant is welcome. Come and meet some of your Texas relatives. For more information write to:

Marc Smith
P.O. Box 9701
Fort Worth, TX 76107

HARLAN CELEBRATION 300
413 1/2 Main St., Box 151
Boonville, MO 65233

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South Central - Marc Smith, P.O. Box 9701
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This newsletter is published at least annually by
Harlan Celebration 300, a permanent organization
established to document the historical contributions
made by Harlans in America. Stories, photos, and
other information submitted for publication should
be sent to the editors, Tom and Marylee Harlan,
7109 Hanks Place, Springfield, Virginia 22153

ROBERT E. LEE'S BOOTBOY
by Robert H. Harlan, IL

My father's name was Noah
Robert Harlan, and he was the son
of Elzophas (Elzephush) Butcher
Harlan (#6849 in the History and
Genealogy of the Harlan Family
compiled by our "cousin" Alpheus).
Long years ago, as a young boy in
our family home in Freeport, Illinois,
I was indulging in one of my favorite
pasttimes — exploring in the attic.
This day I came upon an old trunk
and on opening it I found one of my
father's school papers. While I have
long since forgotten the subject of his
essay, what impressed me was

UPDATING THE GENEALOGY

The following individuals volunteered to coordinate the Harlan genealogy revision/update for the various branches of the family. If you are descended from one of these lines, please contact the coordinator and assist them as much as you can. If your sixth generation ancestor is not listed below, and you are willing to assist in this project, please contact your regional coordinator or newsletter editors so that your name and address can be listed in a future newsletter.

#62 JOSEPH HARLAN	Juanita Creighton, 1507 Longo Rd. T2, Richmond, VA 23233
#68 JOHN HARLAN	Lawrence Hinken, 621 173rd St., Hammond, IN 46324
#111 JONATHAN HARLAN	Pat McCurdy, 2217 S. 107 E. Ave, Tulsa, OK 74129
#119 HANNAN HARLAN	Phyllis Koelsch, 165 Walton, Waukesha, WI 53180
#180 GEORGE HARLAN	Mary F. Whiteside, 118 Highland Park, Glasgow, KY 42141
#181 ELIZABETH HARLAN	
#182 SARA HARLAN	
#187 BETTY HARLAN	Joydelle Wolfram, 315 W. Parkview, Marlin, TX 76661
#188 AARON HARLAN	Thomas N. Harlan, 902 Allgood Rd., Stone Mountain, GA 30083
#189 GEORGE HARLAN	Judy Harlan Chaffin, 2530 Shepherdwood, Germantown, TN 38138
#190 SAMUEL HARLAN	William P. Webb & Thomas L. Webb, P.O. Box 367, Avondale, PA 19311
#191 WILLIAM HARLAN	
#194 AARON HARLAN	Wm. Marion Harlan, 2401 W. Rollins Rd., Columbia, MO 65203
#195 SAMUEL HARLAN	Darlene Harlan, 3620 N. Calhoun Rd., Brookfield, WI 53005
#200 VALENTINE HARLAN	
#202 WILLIAM WEBB	
#203 STEPHEN WEBB	Steve Harrison, 2542 Queen Ridge, Independence, MO 64055
#204 REBECCA WEBB	Hazel Foltyn, Box 93B, El Campo, TX 77437
#205 EZEKIEL WEBB	J.E. (Gene) Wheeler, 1501 Brazos Trail, Plano, TX 75075
#206 JANE WEBB	Helen Walton Ebersole, 1305 Wheatland Ave., Lancaster, PA 17603
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#215 SILAS HARLAN	
#216 JAMES HARLAN	
#217 ELIZABETH HARLAN	
#218 GEORGE HARLAN	
#688 SAMUEL HARLAN	
#795 ELIJAH CALEB HARLAN	
#852 GEORGE HARLAN	
#1584 JONATHAN HARLAN	

his signature, written with great
flourishes, as "Robert Lee Harlan."

In response to my inquiries, he
told me this family legend. During the
Civil War, his father had somehow
wound up as a young teenager in a
Confederate prison camp for
captured Union soldiers. General
Robert E. Lee paid a visit to this
camp, was distressed by what he
found and particularly distressed to
see this young boy among the
prisoners. So, the story goes, he took
the lad with him to be his personal
bootboy.

Years later Elzephush and his
wife Susannah named their youngest
son Robert, in honor of General Lee.
He told his son about this, and for a
while young Robert decided that
Robert Lee Harlan sounded

better than Noah Robert Harlan and
thus used that name on his school
work.

It is a fine story, but I feel
compelled, in the absense of other
documentation, to label it as
"legend" since in the intervening
years I have read or heard of so
many other young boys whom
General Robert E. Lee rescued from
Confederate prison camps to serve
at his bootboys, that I begin to picture
a separate huge encampment
consisting of nothing but bootboys for
General Robert E. Lee.

Ah, welladay. I think we children
enjoyed more the distinction of
having a father named Noah Robert
than we ever would have for Robert
Lee.

THE NAME IS HARLAN

Remarks by

Janice Harlan Mikesell

at Tricentennial Reunion

August 1987

As I expected, it is mostly a middle-aged crowd.

If middle age is the time of life when one grasps the meaning of mortality, the demographics of this reunion come as no surprise.

Defined by the gut — not the head — a sense of mortality seeks connections . . . roots . . . history. Wondering about those who came before, curious about those who will follow. A quick dip into the genetic pool to see what one can come up with. An attempt to make sense of it all.

And so, here we are. Eight hundred strong out of 4,000 families who share a common surname. An estimated 12,000 people in the male bloodline. How many among the unknown females? Another 12,000 perhaps? I try to imagine those 24,000 people all living in one town — a town the size of my own, I might add. I try to imagine being surrounded by Harlans everywhere I go. Harlan at the post office, Harlan at the grocery store, Harlan the newly-elected mayor, having just beaten that upstart, Harlan — Comforting thoughts for one who no longer has use of her own name.

There was heroism in the Harlan family. A Quaker, disowned by his religious community because he refused to let his wife lie in an unmarked grave. My own grandfather, who died saving the life of another man. My father as well, a man of character, whose adolescent face stares straight out at me from the photograph album — an astonishingly finished face on a boy's body. My father, of whom it was said, "He was tough, but he was honest." — No small feat for a lawyer.

Nor did the Harlans think small. My grandfather, a railroad man, was

named John Marshall Harlan; his father's name was George Washington Harlan. But then, they didn't have to think small. With two Supreme Court justices, a Lincoln marriage and Dupont landholdings, humility was too much to ask.

I rather even like their disasters. If we are the way we are because they were the way they were, isn't the Titanic a wonderful comfort? "What do you expect," I can now say of my mistakes, "my relatives built the Titanic." And if other relatives forewarned the Donner party to travel elsewhere, am I not forever entitled to say, "I told you so?"

I have another fantasy, and this is it: among the Harlan faces attending the reunion, I see a mirror image of myself. Literally. A woman of my own age and appearance, standing by the coffeepot, sipping and looking around. We meet, and speak at length about our mutual heritage.

As one who has paid the cruel price of an uprooted existence, this is not a fantasy at all. Like so many others at the reunion, I have come here today to meet myself.

DOLL COLLECTOR

Marjorie Jones is a descendant of George Harlan. She is a retired secretary currently living in Los Osos, CA. The following story is an excerpt from January 1988 Senior.

Marjorie Jones of Los Osos had few dolls as a little girl back in Piggott, Ark. where she grew up as the only daughter among five children. She now has several hundred dolls, all of which she has collected in the last 22 years.

Marjorie's collection started with eight dolls from a neighbor who was about to throw them away. A couple of them proved valuable, including a famous Madame Alexander replica of a character from Louisa May Alcott's "Little Women." She and her

husband, G.B., learned to repair dolls by fixing her first acquisition.

But Marjorie's collection is more than old toys. It is a hobby that indirectly helped sustain her life after major surgery a few years ago.

"It's kept me going some days," Marjorie says. "When I get 'blue' or sick I just take down one of my dolls and look at it. Pretty soon I start feeling better."



Marjorie Jones

THE HARLAN BOOK

Marvine Brown, CA sends a letter she received from GOODSPEED's Book Shop of Boston offering the 1914 History and Genealogy of the Harlan Family by A.H. Harlan (1987 reprint) for \$75.00 plus \$2.00 postage. The same book is available from Peggy Harlan Talley, 104 Fern Dr., Poteau, OK 74953 for \$40.00 incl. shipping, as long as the supply lasts.

* * *

HALBERTS, INC. of Bath, Ohio sent a computer letter to the editors with the "exciting" news that they are about to publish a new book about Harlan immigrants. According to the letter the *first* Harlan they found came to Philadelphia in 1826. His name was Patrick. Apparently the researcher missed the other 139 years of Harlans prior to 1826.

HOW HARLAN BECAME HARLIN by Fred B. Harlin, TX

Now as to my spelling HARLIN — This I am told came about as the outcome of the War Between the States. I quote from a letter written by the Granddaughter of John C. Harlin (No. 2322 on page 226 of the Alpheus H. Harlan History). This was written on Dec. 2, 1954. "I am writing you as to the changing of the Harlin name in the way it is spelled by our line of the family. It was an outcome of the Civil War between the states. It was changed by Uncle Stephen (S.M.) Harlin, an older brother of my Mother and Uncle Smith Harlin. Uncle Stephen was a Veteran of the South and was in Iuka, Mississippi where he was seriously wounded in the battle of Iuka and came near dying of his wound — gangrene set in and he almost bled to death. The army doctor thought he would die if he stayed in the army camp. One of the army officers, with others of the army whose job was to go to the southern planters to buy cattle to feed the soldiers, went to the home of John Mayfield's grandfather on John's mother's side. Mr. Cason, was a big Southern Planter and owned a lot of negroes. They bought beef from Mr. Cason and while they were there, told him about Uncle Stephen and got permission from him to bring Uncle Stephen to his home. He stayed there and got well and taught school before going back to his home in Tennessee. He had such a hard time, and so had our kindred in Tennessee, that is our branch of the Harlin Family. The Harlans were divided over secession, those who lived in Kentucky were for the North and they and their property were not molested. The ones of the family in Tennessee went through hardships of all kinds including the loss of their property. The bitterness of feelings caused the outcome of which the name Harlan was changed to be spelled to Harlin by Uncle Stephen who married Miss Mollie Eperson of Eperson Springs near Nashville."

SHIPBUILDERS TO BRIDGE BUILDERS by Cindy Harlan Breen

Keith Harlan was expected to be a girl. On February 16, 1938 Ralph and Faye Harlan had to find a boy's name quick. Dr. Robert Osborn, and Dr. Keith Chapman were practicing at the Dexter, Iowa clinic where he was born. *Robert Keith Harlan* was named.

Keith was raised on a farm with his brother, Roger, and the twins, Bruce and Barb. They were a church going family. A spring blizzard in 1951 didn't keep them from going on Easter even though the roads were impassable. All the wagons were in use so the brand new John Deere manure spreader was connected to the tractor. Keith, the oldest, remembers being embarrassed to be seen riding in the manure spreader — but the family did not miss church that Easter.

After graduating in 1957; Keith married his High School sweetheart, Joan Nichols of Winterset, Iowa. He went to work for A.M. Cohron, & Sons, Inc., a bridge contractor. He worked as a laborer, and crane operator, and in 1968 he was named Vice-President. Today he is the President. The company is based in Iowa, and has branched out to Nebraska and Kansas. The company owns a Piper aircraft which Keith pilots.

Keith has served as Vice-President and President of the Iowa Chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America. He presently serves both as a director of the Iowa chapter and director on the National AGC Board. He is also active on committees in the Nebraska and Kansas state chapters. In 1986, a Chapter officers meeting was held in Washington, D.C. Keith and Joan attended that meeting and had the opportunity to meet President Reagan who has been a supporter of the construction industry.

Keith is the chairman of the Airport Commission in Atlantic where he and Joan have lived for 27 years. He also keeps busy serving as a deacon on a church board, and is involved in the Gideon Ministry. When Keith was 41 years old he committed his life to Jesus Christ, and he and Joan have faithfully served the Lord since that time.



Keith Harlan

FINANCIAL REPORT

Previous Balance	\$16,350
Income	7,853
Expenses	14,135
Balance	10,068

Future activities including this newsletter depend on your continuing support. Contributions may be sent to:

Harlan Tricentennial Fund
John R. Harlan, Treas.
422 Aumond Rd.
Augusta, GA 30909

HISTORY REPEATS

Mary Alice Harlan Miller, daughter of Louie Hale Harlan, Jr. (died 12-28-54), has identical twin sons! They are named Nathanael Harlan Miller and Philip Hunter Miller born 2-4-82.

Mary Alice Harlan (#8798, p.958 of the family genealogy) was the daughter of Stephen Porter Harlan (#4078). She had twins Marietta and Harry who were born 7-26-1884.

HARLAN HALL OF FAME

HARLAN WINS GOLD MEDAL by Virginia Harlan Williams, NV

The summer of 1948 was also a summer for the Olympic Games, but in a much different way. Television was just coming into our homes and no one dreamed then, that someday all the Olympian names would be familiar to the world. There was a lot of excitement in our home, as our brother, Bruce, was in London, England to compete in the diving competition.

In his childhood he was always very athletic, but had never had any training as a diver. None of our schools even had swimming pools. He had always been very daring and I remember when the police brought him home, as they caught him standing on his head on top of the Media Bridge, which was a structure over 50 feet high. When I look at old pictures, it seems he was always standing on his head. It may have been on the top of our barn or any other high place he could find.

When we lived in Springfield, PA the athletic coach, Herbert Horner, took an interest in Bruce and saw his potential as an athlete. Mr. Horner coached him in wrestling and pole vaulting. We moved to Lansdowne, PA, where Bruce attended high school. He was District 1, Middle Atlantic Wrestling Champion in his weight class and PA State Pole Vaulting Champion. As soon as he graduated, he was drafted into the Navy, where he met Lieutenant Jack Smith. Smith took notice of some of Bruce's tumbling antics and noticed him standing on the diving board. But instead of diving into the pool he did a back flip on the board. Jack Smith was a National Diving Champion and showed him all the fine points of diving. Bruce always credited Jack as the one most responsible for his success. When Bruce was discharged from the Navy, he enrolled in Ohio State and of course was on the diving team.

With only 3 years training he was now in London to compete in

the Olympics. We were so anxious to know the winner and then a telegram arrived. It read "with the grace of God, my dreams came true. Love Bruce". He had won the first Gold Medal of the 1948 Summer Olympics in the 3 meter dive and a Silver Medal in the platform dive. Before returning home he traveled through Europe and won 13 European Championships. During the years 1947 to 1950 he had also won 19 National Championships, 5 Big Ten and 5 NCAA Championships.

Upon his return to Lansdowne, there was a great celebration, with parades and speeches and it was officially proclaimed, "Bruce Harlan Day." He didn't stay in PA very long, as he was due to be married to Frances Dillon of Columbus, Ohio. In 1952 there was an addition to the family, by the name of Laura Sue and then in 1955 Bruce Frederic Harlan.

Bruce coached at Sequia High School in California and then went to the University of Michigan as diving coach. During the summer his partner, Sigma Chi fraternity brother and best friend, Hobie Billingsley (now diving coach as the University of Indiana), gave diving exhibitions all over the country and in Canada. Bruce & Hobie performed with Al Sheehans Aqua Follies for several years. Bruce was a born showman and enjoyed clowning antics as thoroughly as serious diving.

In 1959 they had performed in Bermuda. Bruce had designed a 30 ft. diving tower with a trampoline mounted on the top. They would leap from a small platform onto the trampoline (for greater height). When the platform was shipped to Fairfield, Conn. where they were performing, some of the metal structure was missing. Bruce & Hobie used lumber instead. They gave their performance and when they were dismantling the platform, Bruce was standing on a piece of lumber and it broke. He fell and his head hit the edge of the

swimming pool. He never regained consciousness. Our family was stunned with grief. Bruce is buried at Marion, Ohio and now alongside, is his son, Bruce Frederic, who was also killed in an accident at the age of 16. In 1973, Bruce was inducted into the Swimming Hall of Fame at Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Bruce Ira Floyd Harlan was the son of William Rudolph Bromwell Harlan, (1/29/1903 - 3/1/1987) and Grace Elizabeth Noonan, (3/20/1904 - 2/12/1981). He is a descendent of Michael Harlan, being a grandson of Ira Crane Harlan (#8813) on his paternal side and a descendent of George Harlan, as 6th great grandson of Elizabeth Harlan (#277) on his maternal side.

Bruce's daughter, Laura Harlan Schurtz, her husband Jim and their 4 children attended the Tricentennial reunion in August 1987. Laura was an excellent back stroke swimmer and held 2 Jr. Olympic records in the 50 yd. backstroke. She was awarded the most valuable trophy in Columbus, Ohio. Their daughter, Natalie, 13, plays soccer and was on the winning Washington State Championship Team, where she was chosen the most valuable player, even though she broke her foot during the game and continued to the end. Daughter Sonya is also an excellent soccer player. Son, Joel is a baseball player. First grader, Seth, is a very good soccer player. Both Joel and Seth have done modeling and T.V. commercials.

Virginia Williams is the official "keeper" of the Family Association mailing list.

THOMAS HARLAN BIBLE FOUND by Margaret Reed

Thomas Harlan (#1104), a descendent of both George and Michael Harlan, was born in Penn. in 1778. He settled, with his wife, Sarah Eubanks, in Wilson Co., Tenn., in the early 1800's.

A correspondent in Houston, Texas, wrote me years ago that she had a friend in San Antonio who believed her Matilda Harlan Stanley, was a daughter of Thomas and Sarah Harlan of Wilson Co., Tenn., but she couldn't prove it.

NOW, a Thomas Harlin Bible has been found. The Bible names Matilda Harlin as the first child. I want to send a copy of this Bible entry to the San Antonio descendant, but I do not know his/her name. And my correspondent in Houston is in such poor health that she is unable to respond to my letters.

The births of the following children were written in this newly discovered Bible:

Matilda Harlin, born Aug. 18, 1800
John Harlin, born May 24, 1802
Samuel Harlin, born Oct. 14, 1804
Josiah Harlin, born Oct. 1, 1807
Frances Harlin, born Mar. 25, 1810
Elizabeth Harlin, born Oct. 12, 1812
Robert Harlin, born Oct. 5, 1814
Anna J. Harlin, born April 17, 1817
Amanda Harlin, born Feb. 8, 1819
Dicy Harlin, born Feb. 19, 1822
Sarah Ann Harlin, born Feb. 5, 1825

Of these eleven children, five remained in Tennessee — Josiah, Robert, Samuel, Amanda Phillyis and Dicy Smartt. Three migrated to Mississippi — John, Fanny Eubanks and Matilda Stanley. Sarah Sweatt moved to Kentucky. Elizabeth Reese moved to Indiana and the children of Anna Phillyis migrated to Illinois.

I will be happy to send copies of the Bible entries to descendants of Thomas and Sarah Harlan if they will write to me.

Margaret Reed
Rt. 6, Box 551
Lebanon, Tenn. 37087

REMARKS AT DEDICATION OF COMMEMORATIVE MARKERS by Rev. Lowell Harlan, VA

There is some irony in our being able to set this plaque here. The early Quakers staunchly opposed erecting anything to the memory of a person. But in the 1750s James, a grandson of George, buried his first wife at Kennett Burying Ground nearby, and set gravestones so that location would not be forgotten. In time the matter of the gravestones came up before the Meeting. Tempers flared on both sides, someone removed the stones, and James was disowned by the Meeting. By being permitted to erect this plaque, we have come a long way.

Indeed we have come a long way in several respects. Last summer some 800 of us came from all over the country to celebrate our family's Tricentennial in America. We have come a long way from being only farmers and artisans as our earliest ancestors were. We have come a long way from being only Quakers. But still our family has kept to the basic values of George and Michael and their wives. We have kept the calling to a strong religious faith, to their ideal of hard work, and to their example of solid respectability. We have chosen to develop worthy, decent, and enduring character rather than seeking fame or power.

We are indebted to the people of Centre Meeting for their kindness in allowing us to set this plaque here. We hope that it will remind Harlans and others who visit here of those daring and sturdy ancestors who braved the hardships of travel and of the wilderness to come here to worship God according to their consciences and to raise their families in the solid yeoman traditions of their ancestors. We thank God that He permitted them to come here under His protection, to live under His guidance, and to flourish under His providence.

Almighty God, we give Thee thanks for Thy grace to Thy servants George and Michael, who braved the adversities of persecution, endured the perils of travel, and persisted over the rigors of the New World, to settle in a place where they could worship Thee as Thou didst reveal Thyself to them. Grant that this plaque may remind all who read it of their faith, their courage, and their determination; and that in our generation we may be encouraged and sustained by their examples. Give us grace to live our lives as they lived theirs, and grant that one day we may be joined with them in life eternal with Thee.

LOST AND FOUND

Do you have information about Revolutionary War service of John Harlan, (#208) b. 1750, married Jemima Wright. Also, did he first go to Harrodsburg, Kentucky, before moving to Southern Kentucky?

What is the source of the name Barton as a middle name in 3 generations of the Kentucky Harlans - descendants of the above John?

Patricia B. Conner
16121 S. W. 287th Street
Homestead, FL 33033-1188

I am looking for anyone who might have any information on No. 192, John McPherson and Sarah Harlan, and No. 201, William Crow and Elizabeth Harlan.

Marc B. Smith, Jr.
P.O. Box 9701
Ft. Worth, TX 76107

I am interested in corresponding with those interested in Leah Harlan (#44840) Born 16 Aug. 1824/32 PA, (daughter of Johathan (#15840) & Jane [Hogue] Harlan) and her husband, Henry S. Stanturf.

(Mrs.) Judy K. Dye
19305 S.E. 243rd Place
Kent, WA 98042-4820

CENTRE MEETING Centreville, Delaware

The Meeting House stands on a knoll at the intersection of Center Meeting and Adams Dam Roads, seven miles north of Wilmington, Delaware. A 1711 log building was replaced by the present brick structure in 1796. Those who come for 11 am Sunday worship now pass the frontyard mounting stones grooved by thousands of foot restings by horse-riding predecessors. White-washed gates in the hitching sheds on either side of the building open into tranquil burial grounds. Here lie generations of early families — Harlans, Chandlers, Greggs, Hollingsworths, Philips — as well as those whose names appear in the list of 1794 building fund contributors. Ancient boxwood is scattered around the plots, many of which are inmarked because of an early order to eliminate ostentatious headstones. This was rescinded in 1850, provided all tablets would be of plain design and less than a foot high.

The Meeting was named "Centre" because of its alignment with New Ark Union (at Carrcroft) and Old Kennett Meetings.

The following are excerpts from Centre Meeting historical records.

10,7,1687 — "At ye request of friends beyond Brandywine to have a meeting there this winter season, to which friends is willing and thereto consents.

So wrote Friends of Christiana Hundred in 1687, petitioning the Monthly Meeting (at Carrcroft) for permission to hold services on the river's West Bank. From this request came the still-used Centre Meeting House, first permanent home for a Quaker community here.

10,7,1689 — "George Harlan Desireing ye Concurrence of friends on behalf of ye familys on ye other side of Brandywine for ye holding a meeting this winter amongst themselves by reason of the dangerousness of ye ford to which ye meeting agrees and Consents."

1690 — "George Harlan laid before this meeting, to have a meeting kept constantly over Brandywine. The meeting condescends thereto." (Minutes - Kennet Monthly Meeting)

9,7,1702 — "friends on ye south of Brandywine haveing requested yt they may have Every other first day a meeting on this side ye Creek this meeting haveing taken into Consideration allows thereof and for ye more certain knowledge and settlement of our meeting it is thought expedient and necessary yt our meetings be kept only at two places vizt at Newark, at Valentine Hollingsworth's, one first day, and on ye other side of Brandywine ye other first day."

5,1,1710 — "Its agreed upon yt Allphonsus Kirk is to be allowed 7s. 6d. P acre for what land ye meeting house have occasion for not exceeding six Acres."

9,3,1711 — "This meeting appoints George Harlan, Thos. Hollingsworth, Allphonsus Kirk and Samll Graves to take ye oversight of ye Center meeting house requesting ym wth all Convenient speed to let out ye work to some workmen in order yt it may be more speedily done and return acctt to ye meeting how they proceed."



A LETTER FROM MARTHA

Dear ones all,

I must write to you today to thank you once again from the bottom of my heart for coming so far for our dedication weekend together. It was so good of you to come and we all appreciated your presence. It was a wonderful occasion and I wish more of the 300th Reunion crowd could have been here also. We are indebted to all 800+ family members who so generously made it possible to have the memorial stones in place.

If all goes as expected, this summer will probably find quite a few Harlans returning here for another "look-see", since we have heard from some families who have expressed the desire to do so.

Strangely, all during the weekend, and especially at the Quaker service, I felt our founding fathers presence. In his will and in the few letters which have survived him, he frequently expressed his "fatherly love" for his children. I think it is his love and concern for us which has bound us as a family these past 18 months. May such love ever be with us as we go our separate ways.

Love to all and best wishes,
Martha, Elgene